
Transportation Committee

HJM 4003

Brief Description: Requesting Congress to consider Washington for magnetic levitation transportation funding.

Sponsors: Representatives Ericksen, Kessler, Haler, O'Brien, Talcott, Chase, Dickerson and B. Sullivan.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requests federal funding for the State of Washington for magnetic levitation projects.

Hearing Date: 2/23/05

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

Magnetic levitation (maglev) is a system in which magnetic force lifts, propels and guides a vehicle over a guideway at speeds of 250 to 300 miles per hour. The concept of magnetically levitated trains was first identified around 1900, but significant advancements in maglev technology did not occur until relatively recently. In December 2003, the first commercial maglev system was completed in China by the Transrapid Company, a joint venture of Siemens and Thyssen Krupp. It provides service between downtown Shanghai and its airport at 270 miles per hour along a nineteen mile route. While Germany and Japan have spent significant amounts of time and money developing maglev technology over the last several decades, comparatively little research was performed in the U.S. until the 1990s when the National Maglev Initiative was established.

To evaluate the potential for maglev to improve intercity transportation and to determine an appropriate role for the federal government, the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century" (TEA 21) was passed in 1998, which created a National Magnetic Levitation Technology Deployment Program. Funding consisted of \$55 million. The preconstruction planning was to identify a project that would receive up to \$950 million in authorizations for final engineering and construction of the guideway of the selected project. Applications were solicited from states or their designated authorities. Seven states received preconstruction planning grants. The United States Department of Transportation selected projects in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Baltimore, Maryland for additional study. The five remaining states of California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Nevada received \$1 million in federal funds to further develop their plans.

Summary of Bill:

Requests that the United States Department of Transportation consider the State of Washington as a candidate for federal funding for the implementation of magnetic levitation projects.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.